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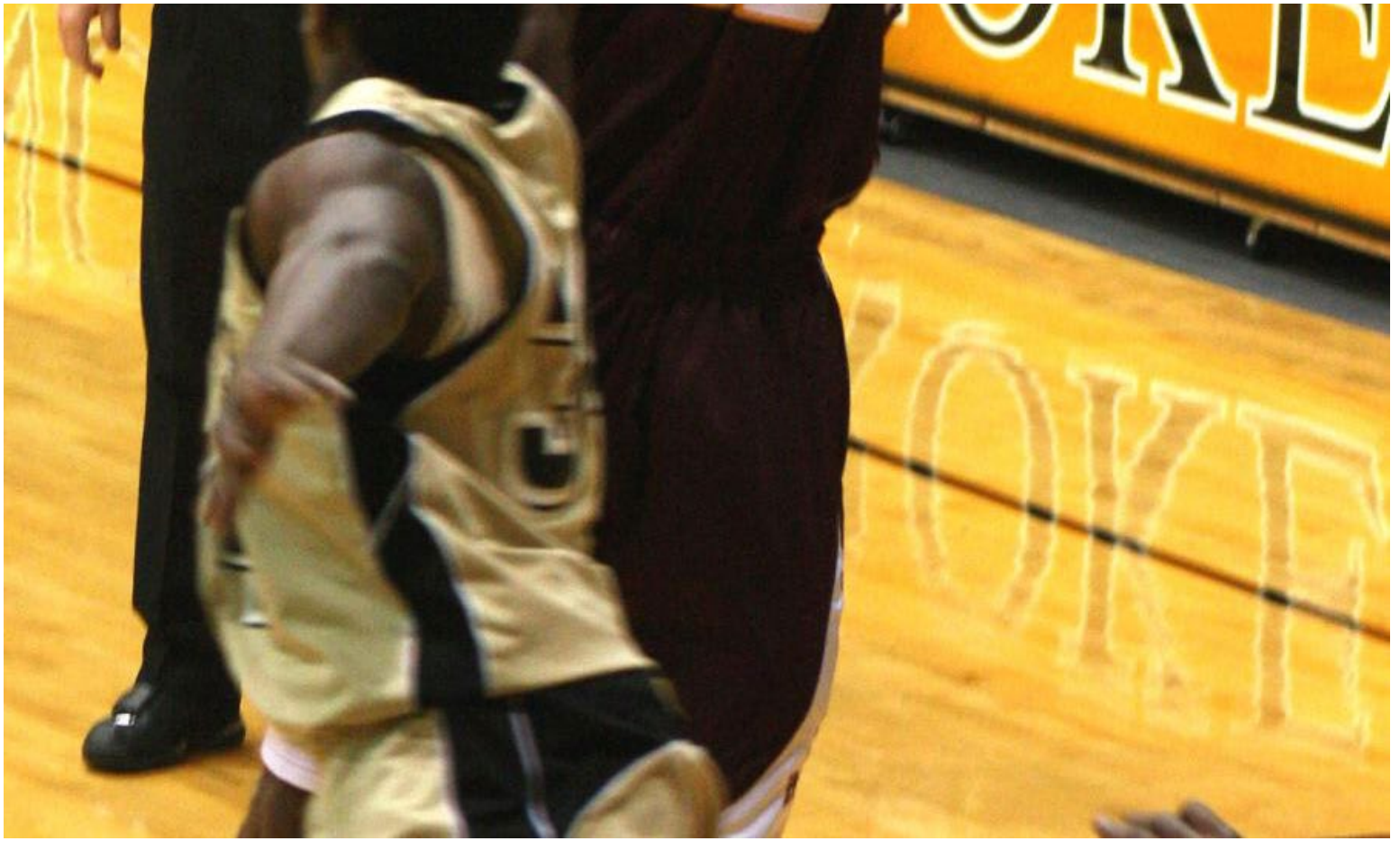
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Pirates Snap Skid With 88-78 PBC Win Over North Georgia





Posted: Jan 30, 2010

SAVANNAH, Ga. - Armstrong Atlantic State placed five players in double figures in picking up its first Peach Belt Conference victory of the season with an 88-78 men's basketball win over visiting North Georgia on Saturday afternoon in Savannah.

The Pirates (6-13, 1-9 PBC) also halted a nine-game skid with the win, their first of the new year. The win also halted the seven-game winning streak of North Georgia (12-7, 7-2 PBC), who had not lost since falling to nationally-ranked Augusta State back on Jan. 4.

With North Georgia holding a slim 14-13 lead with 13:39 left in the first half, senior Keron McKenzie nailed back-to-back three-pointers to put the Pirates up by five. AASU would stretch that lead to nine, 42-33, at halftime as the Pirates hit 53.3 percent of their shots from the floor and also nailed six-of-10 three-pointers.

In the second half, another McKenzie three-pointer capped a 15-8 run coming out of halftime and put the Pirates up by 16, 57-41, with 14:32 left. The Pirates led by as many as 19 in the second half before North Georgia finally cut the lead to single digits with one minute left. AASU hit 7-of-8 free throws down the stretch, and a **Patrick Shokpeka** dunk with six seconds left capped the win for the Pirates, halting the longest losing streak since 1988.

Shokpeka led a quintet of Pirates in double figures, scoring 22 points on the night. Freshman David Pruett added 17 points, making 5-of-6 three-pointers, while Chris Vanlandingham added 12 points and McKenzie chipped in 11. Senior Gabriel Robinson was a pair of rebounds away from a triple-double as he recorded 11 points, 10 assists and eight boards on the day.

Bernard Rimmer led all players for the Saints with 24 points, while Michael Moynihan added 10 points.

The Pirates shot a season-high 55.4 percent from the floor, while knocking down 10-of-18 three-pointers for 55.6 percent. North Georgia shot 50 percent from the floor and 47.1 percent from three-point range.

AASU returns to action on Wednesday, February 3, with a 7:30 p.m. Peach Belt Conference contest against Flagler at Alumni Arena.

Head Coach Jeremy Luther's Post-Game Comments:

On the hot shooting in the first half: "Our guys stepped up offensively. When you start making shots, it starts opening up other things. The guys then did a good job of taking the ball to the basket. It was the perfect storm for us. We were able to knock down shots and have a good defensive effort."

On the play of David Pruett, making his first career start after 17 points at Clayton State on Wednesday: "David's showing a lot of improvement offensively. His motor just keeps going. He's stepped up and started getting a lot of confidence. He brings a lot to the floor - loose ball action, an ability to get to the glass, and he is hard to guard."

On the second-half approach, holding onto the lead: "We were up 17 or 19, and at that point in time there are way more important things than scoring. We still made shots left and right, though. Moving forward, we need to make sure we expand the lead as best we can."



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